



U.S. ARMY JOHN F. KENNEDY
SPECIAL WARFARE CENTER AND SCHOOL
FACT SHEET

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USAJFKSWCS PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

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THE SPECIAL FORCES PIPELINE

The Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) is recognized as the best special operations training and education in the world. Our mission is to train and build the future operational force with Special Forces warriors who are adaptable, agile and capable to immediately enter into combat operations as a member of a Special Forces team.

To do this, the SF pipeline has undergone a transformation that incorporates the most sweeping changes in our history. The heart of our transformation concentrates on enhancing core unconventional warfare skills; on linking the program of instruction to the battlefield; and on placing greater emphasis on foreign-language and cultural training. We have updated our training methodology and leveraged technology to improve the quality of instruction and to more efficiently use time and resources.

The path to the qualification course differs slightly for those Soldiers recruited from within the Army and those who come in with no previous military experience, called initial accession recruits or 18X's. Regardless of their path, upon completion of training the Soldier is awarded the coveted Green Beret and the Special Forces tab. The Special Forces Pipeline begins the day a Soldier arrives for training and is outlined below:

*SFPC I – Special Forces Preparation and Conditioning Course I

Phase I - SFAS – Special Forces Assessment and Selection

*CLT – Common Leader Training

*SFPC II - Special Forces Preparation and Conditioning Course II

Phase II – Small Unit Tactics and UW Skills/SERE/PG/HD/Language Block I

Phase III – Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) Specific Training/Language Block II

Phase IV – Language Block III

Phase V – Unconventional Warfare Culmination Exercise (Robin Sage)

Phase VI – Graduation (Award of the Green Beret and SF tab)

*** Course may be required depending on MOS, skill level, and previous military training**

SF PIPELINE COURSE DESCRIPTION

SFPC I - Special Forces Preparation and Conditioning Course Part I: 25 days

Company A, 1st Bn. prepares and conditions 18X and selected National Guard Soldiers for attendance at SFAS. The program guides and challenges Soldiers new to the Army to increase their physical, mental and emotional readiness while improving military leadership and teamwork skills in preparation for SFAS. Training consists primarily of physical fitness, movement orientation, refresher land navigation, leadership and introduction to Special Forces.

Phase I: SFAS - Special Forces Assessment and Selection: 3 Weeks

Company B, 1st Bn. conducts SFAS training at Camp MacKall, N.C. The SFAS cadre look at nearly 3,000 Special Forces volunteers each year to determine who is suitable for Special Forces training and to determine who is unable to adapt to the Special Forces environment.

The SFAS model focuses on student ability and suitability for service in Special Forces. Teaching, coaching, training and mentoring are important aspects of the program. A series of 12 attributes linked to success in the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) form the basis for evaluating candidate suitability. These attributes include intelligence, physical fitness, motivation, trustworthiness, accountability, maturity, stability, judgment, decisiveness, teamwork, influence, and communications. Several training events such as a land navigation exercise, one-mile obstacle course, runs, road marches, team situational exercises and rappelling are also used to evaluate students.

Common Leadership Training: 17 Days

This training is for all students who are not graduates of the Primary Leadership Development Course or the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course and teaches a variety of Army common Soldier skills and prepares newer recruits to compete with their peers as they enter the SF qualification course.

SFPC II - Special Forces Preparation Course Part II: 19 days

This training is for all 18X's, combat support and combat service support Soldiers and teaches Skill Level 1-4 Light Infantry tasks to improve individual and collective combat skills, enhance leadership ability and individual self-confidence, and improve physical fitness and stamina in preparation for Phase 2 of the SFQC.

SPECIAL FORCES QUALIFICATION COURSE (SFQC)**Phase II: Small Unit Tactics/SERE/PGD/HD/Language: 13 Weeks**

Company C of 1st Battalion teaches five modules in Phase II to train Special Forces candidates on squad level tactics, ODA combat patrols, and supporting warrior skills. Modules four and five are pivotal modules that bridge the gap between the conventional and unconventional warfare mindset and introduces selected special forces core tasks in a time-constrained environment designed to force students to analyze and think in an asymmetrical environment. The students then move on to survival and negotiation training taught by Company D, 1st Bn. The goal is to teach personnel how to survive if they become separated from their unit; to evade a hostile force and make their way back to friendly forces; and to avoid capture. In the event that Soldiers are captured, SERE training prepares them to resist the enemy's attempts at exploitation, to escape from captivity and to return home with honor. Students will also be trained in Peacetime Governmental Detention/Hostage Detention policy and techniques to include a thorough understanding of the Code of Conduct and abduction avoidance. Students also receive their first formal language training, Language Block I, during this phase.

Phase III: Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) Skill Training: 15 Weeks

This phase of training consists of the following courses which all incorporate continued language and cultural training (Language Block II), SF common training, instructor training and interagency operations training into their courses.

18A Officer Course:

Company A, 4th Bn. trains and qualifies officers in the basic skills and knowledge required to perform duties as an ODA commander with an emphasis on adaptive thinking and leadership which fosters critical thinking and creative solutions. This training also includes Special Forces planning and working in joint and interagency operations, engineer and weapons training, communications and medical training, special reconnaissance, direct action, unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, and counterinsurgency operations.

18B Weapons Sergeant Course:

Company B, 4th Bn. trains and qualifies NCOs in the basic skills and knowledge required to perform duties as a weapons sergeant on an SFODA. Students become proficient in a wide variety of small arms, antitank weapons, air defense systems, crew-served weapons, and mortars. The cadre focuses on training students with foreign weapons and equipment. This phase concludes with a light infantry, live-fire training exercise.

18C Engineer Sergeant Course:

Company B also trains and qualifies NCOs in the basic skills and knowledge required to perform duties as an engineer sergeant on an SFODA. These students learn pre-engineering subjects, field construction techniques, field fortifications, land mine warfare (U.S. and foreign mines), bridging, engineer reconnaissance, target analysis, and demolitions. This phase culminates with an engineering field training exercise.

18E Communications Sergeants Course:

Company E, 4th Bn. trains and qualifies NCOs in the basic skills and knowledge required to perform duties as a communications sergeant on an SFODA. The training focuses on all aspects of the communications spectrum using some of the most sophisticated communications equipment in the Army. Each student gains an understanding of basic electronics; antenna theory and construction; cryptography; installation, operation, and maintenance of various radio systems; basic computers; and Special Forces communications techniques and procedures. This phase culminates with a long-range communications exercise.

18D Special Forces Medical Sergeants Course: - 48 Weeks

Unlike the other MOS courses, the 18D course is 48 weeks long including Language Block II training. The Special Warfare Medical Group is responsible for all medical training at the Joints Special Operations Training Center at Fort Bragg, N.C. The medical phase of the Special Forces Medical Sergeants Course consists of the 26-week Special Operations Combat Medic (SOCM) portion and an additional 20-week training cycle that completes the 18D's medical training.

Upon completion of the SOCM portion, a Soldier is capable of providing basic primary care for his special operations team for up to seven days and is capable of sustaining a combat casualty for up to 72 hours after an injury, as required. As part of this course, students also receive clinical training in both emergency pre-hospital and hospital settings. This training is conducted during a four-week deployment to one of two major metropolitan areas: Tampa and Jacksonville, Fla.

The additional 20-week training cycle covers specialized training in medical, surgical, dental, veterinary, laboratory, pharmaceutical and preventive medicine subjects and includes four weeks of clinical experience at selected health care facilities throughout the United States. The focus of this training is on honing student skills as independent, general practice, health care providers. Upon completion of this course students are trained to function as independent health care providers.

Phase IV: Language Training:

The ability to speak a foreign language is a core unconventional warfare skill and is being incorporated throughout all phases of the qualification course. The students will receive their language assignment after the selection phase when they will receive a language starter kit that allows them to begin language training while waiting to return to Fort Bragg for Phase II. The 3rd Bn, 1st SWTG (A) is responsible for all language training at the USAJFKSWCS. The Basic Military Language Course (BMLC) is primarily a performance-oriented language course. Students are trained in one of ten core languages with enduring regional application and must show proficiency in speaking, listening and reading. A student receives language training throughout the Pipeline. In Phase IV, students attend an 8 or 12 week language blitz depending upon the language they are slotted in. The general purpose of the course is to provide each student with the ability to communicate in a foreign language. For successful completion of the course, the student must achieve at least a 1/1/1 or higher on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) in two of the three graded areas (speaking, listening, and reading). The languages are divided into four categories:

Category 1: Spanish, French (8 weeks)

Category 2: German , Indonesian (8 weeks)

Category 3: Persian-Farsi, , Russian, Tagalog*, (12 weeks)

Category 4: Arabic, Korean, Mandarin Chinese (12 weeks,)

Phase V: Unconventional Warfare Culmination Exercise (Robin Sage): 4 Weeks

Robin Sage is conducted eight times a year by Company E, 1st Battalion at Camp Mackall. Robin Sage is a problem-solving Field Training Exercise (FTX) where students put their knowledge and skills to use as student Special Forces teams. During this unconventional warfare exercise, the students are required to apply the lessons learned from previous months of Special Forces MOS training and field training to include survival and foreign language based scenarios. This exercise involves the students, counterinsurgent and guerrilla personnel (other service members), auxiliary personnel, and cadre. This scenario stresses realism as the student teams train a mock guerilla force in a hostile environment using civilians in the surrounding community as the auxiliary. This exercise is conducted throughout 15 counties in south central North Carolina and covers approximately 50,000 square miles. By the conclusion of Robin Sage, the students have been placed in situations where they were required to use MOS and leadership skills, language and cultural skills and their abilities were tested to work in adverse and ambiguous conditions.

Phase VI: Special Forces Graduation

Admission into the Special Forces Regiment begins the day before graduation at the JFK Plaza on Ardennes Street. The Regimental First Formation is where the graduates don the coveted Green Beret and wear the Special Forces tab for the first time as they are officially welcomed to the SF brotherhood by the honorary SF Regimental commander and representatives from their Special Forces group of assignment. The next day, a formal graduation takes place with the awarding of the certificate of graduation and the Yarborough knife as these distinguished men are recognized as Special Forces warriors.

- VERITAS ET LIBERTAS -